

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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R 180327Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

INFO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 5743

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 26322

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, TH

SUBJ: PATTANI TURMOIL

FOLLOWING TEL SENT ACTION BANGKOK DEC 17 FM SONGKHLA

RPTD FOR YOUR INFO:

SONGKHLA 221

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS TH

SUBJ: PATTANI TURMOIL

1. SEVERAL HUNDRED DEMONSTRATORS STILL AT PATTANI MOSQUE
DESPITE HEAVY RAIN. PEACEKEEPING DIRECTOR FOR MUSLIM PROVINCES,
LT. GEN. SAN CHITBATIMA, ACCEDED TO WISHES OF MUSLIM
REPRESENTATIVES AND SENT CABLE TO BANGKOK CALLING ON PM
KHUKRIT TO COME TO PATTANI AND LISTEN TO GRIEVANCES. UNCERTAIN
HERE WHAT KHUKRIT WILL DO.

2. WORD IS NOW THAT SOLE SURVIVOR OF NOVEMBER 30 ATROCITIES
(SONGKHLA 217) HAS DISAPPEARED, AND MUSLIMS ANGRY AGAIN WITH
BELIEF THAT RTG AUTHORITIES IN AREA HAVE REMOVED ONLY WITNESS
TO CRIME. THIS PLUS GRENADE WHICH KILLED AT LEAST 11 MUSLIMS
DECEMBER 13 (SONGKHLA 219) MEANS THAT PM HAS A LOT OF
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MOLLIFYING TO DO IN MUSLIM AREAS.

3. SAN HIMSELF HAS BEEN FAIRLY SUCCESSFUL IN DEALING WITH CRISIS. HE WAS BORN AND RAISED IN PATTANI AND STILL HAS MUSLIM SECOND-COUSINS THERE, AND MOST REPORTS ON HIS HANDLING OF SITUATION SO FAR ARE FAVORABLE. FACT THAT PERPETRATORS WERE MARINES FROM CENTRAL THAILAND ON TDY OPERATIONS AND NOT HIS TROOPS ALSO HELPS HIS STANDING. SAN CALLED TOGETHER MUSLIM RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND TEACHERS, ALONG WITH MP'S FOR PATTANI AND LOCAL RTG BUREAUCRATS IN EFFORT TO PROMOTE COMMUNAL DIALOGUE. THIS SEEMED TO BE WORKING WELL, WITH FAMILIES OF VICTIMS READY TO ACCEPT FINANCIAL SETTLEMENT, THEN GRENADE THROWN INTO SITUATION.

COMMENT: EXPECT IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO DISCOVER IDENTITY OF GRENADE-TOSSER. HOWEVER, RTG HERE SHOULD KNOW IDENTITY OF MARINES AT SAIBURI CHECKPOINT WHO COMMITTED NOVEMBER 30 MURDERS. INTERESTING TO SEE WHETHER THEY WILL BE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE, SINCE THAIS NOT NOTED FOR PROSECUTING MILITARY OR POLICE OFFENDERS, ESPECIALLY WHEN THEY ARE GUILTY OF PICKING ON MINORITY GROUPS.

FACT THAT INCIDENTS HAVE TRIGGERED SUCH VEHEMENT ANTI-THAI SPEECHES BY DEMONSTRATORS, ALONG WITH GOSSIP ABOUT HOLY WAR AND CALLS FOR OUTSIDE AID TO SEPARATIST, SHOWS HOW DEEP RANCOR GOES. EVEN IF RTG SMOOTHS SITUATION OVER, AS IT HAS DONE IN PAST, MORE ALIENATION HAS OCCURRED, AND POTENTIAL REMAINS FOR INEVITABLE FUTURE CONFRONTATIONS. EXPECT THIS IS NOT LOST ON PROVOCATEURS OF BOTH SIDES WHO MUST BE IMPRESSED WITH SIZE AND SPEED OF MUSLIM REACTION. CASTRODALE
WHITEHOUSE

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